



budget would decline over the next several years, in response to reduced tensions and threats.

Because it would take one to two years to complete the required base closure and environmental impact studies under the Section 2687 procedures, then-Secretary of Defense Cheney decided to get started and in January 1990, DoD announced a list of candidates for closure. These studies were never completed. With President Bush's signing of P.L. 101-510, DoDo began its review of the base structure anew. The new law authorized independent presidential BRAC commissions in 1991, 1993 and 1995. The first of the three commissions to operate under the new law received Secretary Cheney's recommendations in April 1991. Cheney recommended a significant base structure drawdown and the 1991 commission accepted approximately 90 percent of those recommendations.

In 1993 and 1995, Commission recommendations for additional base closures and realignments were approved by President Clinton and approved by the Congress.

The 1997 QDR concluded that additional infrastructure savings were necessary and that retaining excess base infrastructure wasn't needed with a smaller military force, and wasted scarce defense resources essential to future military modernization. Base closings became an integral part of this plan.

Under the BRAC process, the secretary of Defense makes recommendations to a commission, nominated by the president and confirmed by the Senate. The commission, after being confirmed by the Senate, reviews these recommendations and makes its own recommendations to the president. The president then reviews the recommendations, either sends those back to the commission for additional work or forwards them, without changes, to the Congress, and then the recommendations of the commission go into effect unless disapproved by a joint resolution of the Congress.

Lawmakers did not agree until 2001 to schedule another round of base closings. Before it was resolved, the dispute held up a conference agreement on the fiscal 2002 defense authorization bill (PL 107-107) and led President George W. Bush to threaten to veto the bill if it did not allow a new round in 2005.

Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld and Army GEN Henry H. Shelton, then chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the House Armed Services Committee in July 2001 that the Pentagon maintained 25 percent more facilities than it needed, even after four rounds of base closings in the 1990s. By some accounts, the excess military bases annually cost taxpayers an estimated \$3.5 billion.

In July 2001, the Department of Defense announced an Efficient Facilities Initiative (EFI), which will enable the U.S. military to match facilities to forces. EFI ensures the primacy of military value in making decisions on facilities and harnesses the strength and creativity of the private sector by creating partnerships with local communities. The EFI will encourage a cooperative effort between the president, Congress and the military and local communities to achieve the most effective and efficient base structure. It will give local communities a significant role in determining the future use of facilities in their area by transferring closed installations to local redevelopers at no cost (provided that proceeds are reinvested) and by creating partnerships with local communities to own, operate, or maintain those installations that remain.

In mid-December 2001, House and Senate negotiators authorized a new round of military base closings, but delayed any action until 2005. Although the Bush administration and the Senate had wanted the base-closing process to begin in 2003, the House had been opposed. Under the compromise plan, the secretary of Defense will submit a force structure plan and facility inventory, with a certification that proposed closings were justified by the force structure plan and that they would produce net savings. The Bush administration has estimated that 20 to 25 percent of military bases are surplus, and that the Pentagon could save \$3 billion a year by eliminating surplus facilities.

In August 2002, it was estimated the next round of base closures in 2005 could save \$6 billion a year, even if it cut only 12 percent of DoD's military infrastructure. In January 2004, the Department of Defense announced that it had requested commanders of installations in the United States, territories and possessions to gather information about their installations as part of the 2005 round of BRAC. All installations are to participate in these calls. In a related action, the department also published Draft Selection Criteria in the 23 December 2003 *Federal Register* for public comment, which will be used as part of the evaluation process.

*Compiled from the Department of Defense Web site and [www.globalsecurity.org](http://www.globalsecurity.org). Full reports can be found at [defenselink.mil](http://defenselink.mil).*

# All You Need to Know about BRAC

FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

**Q: What is BRAC?**

**DoD:** "BRAC" is an acronym that stands for base realignment and closure. It is the process DoD has previously used to reorganize its installation infrastructure to more efficiently and effectively support its forces, increase operational readiness and facilitate new ways of doing business.

**Q: How is BRAC transformational?**

**DoD:** BRAC provides a singular opportunity to reshape defense infrastructure to optimize military readiness. The BRAC 2005 process will help find innovative ways to consolidate, realign, or find alternative uses for current facilities to ensure that the United States continues to field the best-prepared and best-equipped military in the world. BRAC will also enable the U.S. military to better match facilities to forces, meet the threats and challenges of a new century, and make the wisest use of limited defense dollars.

**Q: What benefit does the Department anticipate from a future BRAC round?**

**DoD:** The Department will be able to divest itself of unnecessary installation infrastructure and use the resultant savings for improving fighting capabilities and quality-of-life for military forces. This will allow the Department to rationalize installation infrastructure with 21st century national security imperatives.

**Q: What are some of the major elements of the BRAC 2005 process and what will ensure it will be fair?**

**DoD:** The process is governed by law; specifically, the Defense Base Closure and Realignment Act of 1990. The process begins with a threat assessment of the future national security environment, followed by the development of a force structure plan and basing requirements to meet these threats. DoD then applies published selection criteria to determine which installations to recommend for realignment and closure.

The secretary of Defense will publish a report containing the realignment and closure recommendations, forwarding supporting documentation to an independent commission appointed by the president, in consultation with congressional leadership. The commission has the authority to change the Department's recommendations if it determines that the secretary deviated substantial-

ly from the force structure plan and/or selection criteria. The Commission will hold regional meetings to solicit public input before making its recommendations.

History has shown that the use of an independent commission and public meetings make the process as open and fair as possible. The Commission forwards its recommendations to the president for review and approval, who then forwards the recommendations to Congress. Congress has 45 legislative days to act on the commission report on an all-or-none basis. After that time, the Commission's realignment and closure recommendations become binding on the Department. Implementation must start within two years, and actions must be complete within six.

**Q: How will BRAC 2005 be different from past rounds?**

**DoD:** The process outlined in the BRAC Act of 1990, Public Law 101-510, as amended, remains primarily the same as used in the three previous rounds. However, there are some changes.

Military value will continue to be an element of the published selection criteria. In previous rounds, as DoD policy, the military value criteria took priority over the other criteria. In BRAC 2005, however, there is now a statutory requirement that military value be the primary consideration.

The BRAC 2005 process requires a separate report before the secretary's recommendations on closures and realignments. In this report, which is due to Congress with the budget for FY05 (about February 2004), the secretary must include, among other things, the 20-year force structure plan of probable threats, a comprehensive inventory of installations, a discussion of categories of excess capacity and a certification by the secretary that a BRAC round in 2005 is necessary.

In addition to statutory changes, there are BRAC process changes, which the secretary directed in his November 15, 2002, kick-off memorandum, "Transformation Through Base Realignment and Closure."

**Q: Why do we need a BRAC round?**

**DoD:** The Department's position that significant excess capacity remains in the defense infrastructure is supported by independent agencies. The specific level of excess is very dependent on the assumptions used in the analysis. Past experience indicates that more extensive study of joint basing use and cross-service functional analysis could further increase the level of excess through better utilization of the remaining infrastructure.

The Department must be allowed to reconfigure its infrastructure to best support the

transformation of our warfighting capability. The Department must be allowed the opportunity to assess its installation infrastructure to ensure it is best sized and placed to support emerging mission requirements for national security needs.

**Q: Which installations will be looked at in this round?**

**DoD:** All military installations within the United States and its territories will be examined as part of this process.

**Q: How many installations will be closed?**

**DoD:** It's too early to say and there are no specific numbers or "targets." Using specific selection criteria that emphasize military value, DoD must complete a comprehensive review before it can determine which installations should be realigned or closed. In 2005, an independent Commission will review the secretary's recommendations, hold public hearings, visit various sites, and ultimately send its recommendations to the president.

**Q: Why would we close U.S. installations before we close overseas installations?**

**DoD:** Based on the secretary's guidance in his 20 March 2003 memorandum, "Integrated Global Presence and Basing Strategy," the Department is currently developing a long-term, comprehensive and integrated overseas strategy. The Department anticipates that decisions regarding the closure of overseas installations, if warranted, will be developed after a thorough review of this strategy later this year.

**Q: Future national security threats are difficult to forecast, and military facilities are impossible to recover when lost. Doesn't closing additional military facilities risk our ability to respond to emergent, unforeseen military threats in the future? This situation could force the reclaiming of closed installations and functions.**

**DoD:** The BRAC process includes a comprehensive analysis of future threat considerations and develops strategies and basing to counter threat projections. The Department believes that concerns about eliminating too much infrastructure now is based on two faulty assumptions: (1) prior closures affected our ability to mobilize; and (2) prior closures cut too deeply already. The Department has not closed installations or excessed properties that might be required in the future. In fact, the Department accomplished an in-depth analysis/review of this subject and provided the results to Congress in 1999 in the "Report on the Effect of Base Closures on Future Mobilization Options—November

1999." The study found that the current installation infrastructure can accommodate a force structure equivalent to that of 1987, even after previous BRAC reductions. This review found that, for the most part, only "reconstitutable" assets have been closed and/or excessed in BRAC, also demonstrating that it is more cost effective to rebuild or obtain these assets in the private sector, should they be needed, than it is to retain them. The review also found that the "difficult to reconstitute" assets necessary to support reconstitution have been either retained in the current inventory or transferred to organizations, such as the Guard or Reserve, which would ensure their continuing availability.

**Q: Why does the Department not support an "Early-Out or Exclusion List" for BRAC?**

**DoD:** Altering the existing BRAC process to require an exclusion list would seriously undermine the Department's ability to reconfigure its current infrastructure into one in which operational capacity maximizes both warfighting capability and efficiency.

Excluding installations up front would preclude options that only become apparent as a result of conducting a comprehensive analysis covering all installations. To truly reshape infrastructure to match force structure, realignment options under BRAC 2005 will be critically important; exclusionary lists would restrict realignments and preclude these options.

**Q: How much has been saved through previous BRAC rounds?**

**DoD:** The four previous BRAC rounds have eliminated approximately 20 percent of DoD's capacity that existed in 1988 and, through 2001, produced net savings of approximately \$16.7 billion, which includes the cost of environmental clean-up. Recurring savings beyond 2001 are approximately \$7 billion annually. In independent studies conducted over previous years, both the General Accounting Office and the Congressional Budget Office have consistently supported the Department's view that realigning and closing unneeded military installations produces savings that far exceed costs.

**Q: How will the Commission be selected, and who will serve?**

**DoD:** The BRAC Act of 1990, as amended, specifies the selection process for the nine Commissioners, who must be nominated by the president for Senate confirmation no later than March 15, 2005. In selecting individuals for nominations for appointments to the Commission, the president will consult with the speaker of the House of Representatives



and the majority leader of the Senate concerning the appointment of two members each, and consult with the minority leaders of the House of Representatives and the Senate concerning the appointment of one member each.

**Q: What is the role of the installation commander in the BRAC process?**

**DoD:** A primary role of installation commanders in the BRAC process is to certify information used to conduct the analyses. To enhance fairness in the BRAC process by treating all installations on an equal footing, all information submitted to the secretary of Defense and the 2005 BRAC Commission for use in making recommendations for base closures and realignments must be certified by the submitter as accurate and complete to the best of their knowledge and belief.

**Q: Can local communities request that DoD installations in their area be considered for closure during BRAC 2005?**

**DoD:** Yes. The BRAC Act of 1990, as amended, addresses this issue with the following guidance: "The Secretary of Defense shall consider any notice received from a local government in the vicinity of a military installation that the government would approve of the closure or realignment of the installation."

**Q: Will communities or states that were affected by past base closures be protected in future base closure rounds? Would their past losses be calculated in determining "cumulative economic impact"?**

**DoD:** The Department must consider all military installations equally, without regard to whether the installation has been previously considered or proposed for closure or realignment. In addition, the Department will adhere to the statutory requirements regarding the selection criteria that will be used in the BRAC process, of which military value is the primary consideration. In doing so, the Department will consider "the economic impact on existing communities in the vicinity of military installations."

**Q: How have local communities affected by installation closures fared overall?**

**DoD:** Some base realignments and closures may cause near-term social and economic

disruption. However, there are many success stories from previous closures. For example, at Charleston Naval Base, S.C., the local community, assisted by DoD, was able to create approximately 4,500 new jobs. Approximately 90 private, state and federal entities are currently reusing the former naval base. Since the closure of Mather Air Force Base, Calif., more than 54 leases have been generated at the new Mather Field complex. Its prime location and one of the country's longest runways have made it an active air cargo hub for California's central valley and the Sacramento region. In addition, the former base now employs nearly 3,700 personnel with its high-tech businesses, manufacturing, operations, educational centers, government agencies, and recreational facilities. At the former Fort Devens, Mass., more than 3,000 new jobs have been generated and 2.7 million square feet of new construction has occurred. With 68 different employers on site, redevelopment ranges from small business incubators to the Gillette Corp., which occupies a large warehouse/distribution center and manufacturing plant. A base closure can actually be an economic opportunity, especially when all elements of a community work together.

*This article was compiled from the Department of Defense's Web site. You can find the complete list of questions at: [www.defenselink.mil/brac/](http://www.defenselink.mil/brac/).*

## "Little Pink Cards" GO AWAY

BY BONNIE POWELL

All over America, Guard and Reserve personnel are burning their "little pink cards."

The signing of the 2004 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) signaled unlimited shopping privileges for Reserve Component members and their families. It also signaled

the end of issuing, tracking and checking off those little pink Commissary Privilege Cards. Previously, Reserve Component personnel and their families were allowed 24 commissary shopping days per calendar year, and they had to have their privilege cards initialed at the commissary each day they shopped.

"Thanks to Congress and the Department of Defense for bringing full-time commissary shopping to the Total Force," said Patrick Nixon, deputy director of the Defense Commissary Agency (DeCA). Nixon noted that special thanks should go to those in DoD whose quick actions gave Guard and Reserve members unlimited commissary shopping in time to enjoy holiday savings.

"It's a long overdue and significant benefit enhancement for Guard and Reserve personnel and their families as well as 'gray area' retirees," said Joe Barnes, national executive secretary for the Fleet Reserve Association. Barnes is also a member of the Defense Commissary Agency Patron Council.

"We think it's a great deal," said Col. James

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## BRAC AND THE COMMISSARY

The Defense Commissary Agency (DeCa) is responsible for operating military commissaries, considered a non-pay compensation benefit. The Department of Defense issues criteria for establishing, continuing or closing a commissary.

Current procedures do not include Reserve and Guard members as part of the population that is counted when considering whether or not a commissary should remain open when an installation closes due to Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC). Last year, legislation passed that enabled Reserve Component members, their families, and gray-area Reservists to have unlimited access to the commissary, and this needs to be taken into consideration. Let your congressional delegation know that their change to the law will have an impact on BRAC criteria.